

HB 3040 Testimony- Johnna N. Timmes, Education Initiatives Director

Office of Governor Tina Kotek

House Education Committee

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Hello Chair Neron, Vice-Chairs Dobson and McIntire. For the record, my name is Johnna Timmes, and I am Governor Kotek's Education Initiatives Director.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 3040. And many thanks to Rep. Kropf for his continued commitment to increasing student literacy achievement. HB 3040 represents a critical next step in building upon the foundation established by HB 3198 - the Early Literacy Success Initiative – which advanced our state's commitment to improving early literacy outcomes for all Oregon students.

HB 3040 makes essential technical improvements that will strengthen the effectiveness and reach of our early literacy efforts, positioning Oregon to achieve the kinds of gains we've seen in other states where intentional, evidence-based literacy strategies have significantly improved reading and writing outcomes for early learners.

HB 3198 laid the groundwork for a comprehensive approach to early literacy by prioritizing professional development for educators, funding for curriculum and high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading, high dosage tutoring support for our students that need the most support, and access to extended learning, including summer and after school opportunities. HB 3040 strengthens and refines these efforts by addressing key gaps and ensuring that the system is equipped to deliver meaningful, lasting improvements in student achievement in reading and writing.

One of the most impactful changes in HB 3040 is the expansion of professional development opportunities to include instructional assistants. Instructional assistants are essential partners in the classroom, particularly in early literacy instruction. They play an important role in supporting literacy instruction and reinforcing reading strategies. This change will create more cohesive and effective classroom environments where all staff are equipped with the tools and knowledge to support student literacy development.

HB 3040 also takes an important step in ensuring that all students have access to high-quality, evidence-based curriculum and instructional materials by requiring school districts to adopt curricula from a list approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). Research consistently shows that using high-quality instructional materials aligned with the science of reading significantly improves student outcomes, for emergent readers as well as, struggling readers. As

of December 2024, approximately 80% of school districts, representing about 185,000 students, have adopted research-aligned core curriculum for Early Literacy from the State Board of Education adopted list. Our goal is to ensure all children have access to the highest quality instructional materials. This step helps to establish consistency and quality in early literacy instruction which will address disparities in reading outcomes and ensure that every child—regardless of their zip code—has access to the resources they need to succeed.

And to ensure that consistency and quality exists, HB 3040 empowers the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to create and facilitate a regional network of literacy experts. This model draws on the successful approaches used in states like Colorado, Tennessee, and Mississippi, where embedding regional expertise and building capacity at the district and school levels has led to significant improvements in early literacy outcomes. Under this program, ODE will work with entities, such as ESD, universities, or other qualified entities to build a cohesive system that trains and supports literacy coaches, who will then work directly with schools and teachers to implement effective literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading. This creates a sustainable model for ongoing professional development, continuous improvement, and targeted support for educators and students. This is our intent in Section 7 of -1 amendment and we will work to draft a -2 amendment to clarify this goal.

HB 3040 is a strategic and necessary next step to ensure that the investments made through the Early Literacy Success Initiative and investments from Gov. Kotek's recommended budget are maximized and that early literacy gains are realized at scale. By expanding access to professional development, strengthening curriculum adoption requirements, and building a sustainable network of literacy experts, HB 3040 will equip Oregon's educators with the tools and support they need to help all students become confident, capable readers and writers.

Thank you, and I'm happy to take your questions.